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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ 3/20

" Today moderate Tegucigalpa-based daily "El Herald" carried comments and reactions by representatives of Honduran political parties to the beginning of hostilities in Iraq. The President of the Liberal Party in the Congress stated, "the Liberal Party opposes war between the US and IRAQ... the Honduran government should first get the consensus of its citizens before announcing any official position or support for anyone in this international conflict. Not a single Honduran is in favor of war because poor countries are the ones who will suffer the consequences. We have to plead for peace in the world. El Herald also carried half-page interviews with the German and French Ambassadors to Honduras".

" A member of the political committee of the "Partido Unificacin Democr tica" condemned the Honduran government position. "Hondurans should not take sides in this war. The UD Party cannot support a military conflict thatwhich does not involve the country's national interest. A war could impact unnecessarily on our economy."

" The Resident Representative of the United Nations, Jeffrey Avina, was quoted as denying that the conflict between the U.S. and Iraq would have a negative impact in Honduras, saying that food aid won't suffer any changes. "What is important is that the country conclude an agreement with the IMF in order to have support from the international community during the upcoming months".

Palmer.